

THE EFFECTS OF ACCREDITATION IN AMERICAN OVERSEAS SCHOOLS:
A COMPARISON OF PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS
AND CHIEF SCHOOL OFFICERS

By

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To Sherry, Josh, and Morgan

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CHIEF SCHOOL OFFICERS

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The accreditation process has been of importance to American Sponsored Overseas Schools for decades. This study was undertaken to examine whether accreditation improved the quality of the American Sponsored Overseas Schools as perceived by the school board members (SBMs) and chief school officers (CSOs) serving them.

The study was confined to the CSOs and SBMs of the 105 K-12 schools sponsored by the U.S. Department of State Office of Overseas Schools. The survey instrument, which was developed and validated by the researcher, included demographic information and 24 items regarding CSO and SBM perceptions of the value of accreditation. Each item was rated on a Likert scale. Questionnaires were returned by 85 CSOs and 413 SBMs, a return rate of 81% and 69%,

respectively. The statistical procedures used to analyze the data were frequency counts, t-tests, and analysis of variance (ANOVA) .

Based on the analysis, it was found that (a) a majority of both school board member (SBM) and chief school officer (CSO) respondents perceived accreditation as contributing to school improvement and facilitating educational and social change; (b) a majority of both school board members and heads of schools perceived that the benefits of accreditation outweighed the financial cost; (c) the perceptions of the overall value of accreditation of SBMs and CSOs who had served during an accreditation process did not differ significantly from those of SBMs and CSOs who had not served during an accreditation process; (d) a majority of both SBMs and CSOs perceived that accredited schools were able to attract more and/or better qualified students than nonaccredited schools; (e) there was strong agreement between school board members and heads of schools that attendance at accredited American sponsored overseas schools improved a student's chances of admission to universities in the United States; (f) school board members of U.S. and host country national citizenship perceived the overall value of accreditation more positively than did third country national school board members, although there was no difference in the perceptions of chief school officers according to citizenship; (g) no significant difference existed in the perceptions of the overall value of accreditation according

to the size of school; and (h) when the accrediting agency was used as the variable, there was no significant difference among the chief school officers, although the overall value of accreditation was perceived more positively by school board members serving schools which are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Background and Overview

American schools overseas have been in existence for more than 100 years. Today, the number of American children residing abroad are estimated to be nearly a quarter million, and they attend a variety of schools. For example, U.S. military personnel offspring usually attend Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DODDS) which are a formal part of the military establishment. The remainder of the children usually attend nongovernment, independent schools of various kinds. These schools include private not-for-profit schools, private schools operated for profit, missionary schools, and schools operated on behalf of other nations (i.e., British schools, German schools, or French schools). Although the schools vary in size and basic characteristics, most share two common purposes:

(a) to provide educational opportunities for American and other children generally comparable to those available in schools in the United States, and (b) to demonstrate American educational philosophy and practice abroad in order to help further international understanding. (Department of State Overseas Schools Advisory Council, 1990/91, p. 1)

Those relatively few schools established overseas prior to World War II were developed to serve American business interests or children of missionaries (Engleman, Rushton,

Brody, & Brown, 1990). One of the earliest schools was located in Mexico City, the American School Foundation, A.C., established in 1888. This school also became the first accredited overseas school, granted accreditation by Southern States Association of Schools and Colleges, in 1930 (McGugan, 1970). The American School in Buenos Aires was the next overseas school to be accredited, receiving accreditation in 1938 from Southern States Association (Department of State Overseas Advisory Council, 1990/91). This accreditation activity demonstrated the recognition of a need to establish the credibility of these schools and of a need to continue to improve the quality of the programs offered by the schools. These overseas American schools were the focus of this study. More specifically, this study addressed the effects of accreditation as perceived by school boards and chief school officers overseas.

After World War II, and the breakup of the colonial powers such as Britain, France, and Belgium, the role of the United States in world politics changed. The United States government desired to establish diplomatic relations with the countries formed from the old colonies. During that period in history the number of Americans abroad grew rapidly, resulting in a need for more American schools overseas. This trend has continued and, today, the United States Department of State, Office of Overseas Schools reports that there are 92,752 students in 177 schools in 107 countries. The estimated combined budgets for these schools is nearly

\$300,000,000 (Department of State Overseas Advisory Council, 1990/91). Again, these numbers do not reflect those students in DODDS.

The challenge of living overseas and away from one's country presents tremendous problems for Americans as well as for the foreign nationals of other nations. Security, culture shock, stress, and language barriers are but a few of the difficulties these employees must overcome. Selection and retention of effective personnel is of prime concern to the State Department of the United States and to American businesses operating abroad. Many of these employees are also parents who must accept overseas positions to facilitate advancement within their respective professional careers. These parents may be willing to sacrifice the comforts associated with living in the United States, but they almost always require assurance that their children will not suffer from inadequate educational opportunities, regardless of the country in which they are employed. The availability of a quality education is consequently of vital importance to any family with school age children contemplating employment outside the United States. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the government to provide that assurance (Orr, 1981b). Accreditation helps to assure these parents that the schools their children attend meet or exceed minimum standards.

In 1963, as a result of concerns about the quality of education in the overseas schools, a contract was granted to

the National Education Association to undertake a survey of these school authorities concerning educational quality. The purpose was to conduct a qualitative study of the quality of American overseas schools in the Near East South Asian part of the world. Finis L. Engleman, Executive Secretary Emeritus of the American Association of School Administrators, headed the team. The team collected data from the schools they visited and presented a written document entitled "American Dependent Schools" (Engleman, Rushton, Brody, & Brown, 1990). A major recommendation of this historical and significant report was to establish an office in the American State Department to provide a professional unit to oversee funds to schools receiving grants and to be of assistance to these schools. As a result, in 1964, the Office of Overseas Schools within the U.S. Department of State (A/OS) was established with Ernest Mannino as its director (Engleman, Rushton, Brody, & Brown, 1990).

The concern for the quality of schooling became a major focus of the Office of Overseas Schools and for parents employed by U.S. government agencies overseas. And, accreditation was one of the avenues through which quality could be monitored (E. Mannino, personal communication, 1991). This concern for quality education was echoed by American business interests. "Of primary interest to U.S. corporations operating abroad are the U.S. regional accrediting agencies. These are generally expected to assure

that American sponsored overseas schools are adequate in terms of U.S. principles and standards" (Orr, 1981b, p. 20).

The Office of Overseas Schools currently sponsors 177 of these American schools throughout the world, of which approximately 90% are accredited by American accrediting agencies. The A/OS encourages sponsored schools to seek accreditation since, in the United States, it is the most widely accepted index of adequate schooling. That is, accreditation insures that these schools offer a high-quality counterpart American education with an American curriculum, American textbooks, and teachers who are skilled to teach in idiomatic English.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine whether accreditation improves the quality of respective American Sponsored Overseas Schools as perceived by school board members and heads of schools (chief school officers) of the secondary American Sponsored Overseas Schools. An additional purpose was to compare the perceptions of these two groups of school authorities on several educational variables concerning the effects of accreditation. Specifically, answers to the following research questions were sought concerning the American Sponsored Overseas Schools in relation to accreditation:

1. What proportion of school board members and heads of schools perceive accreditation as contributing to school improvement and facilitating educational and social change?

2. What proportion of school board members and heads of schools perceive the benefits of accreditation to outweigh the financial cost?

3. Do the perceptions of the overall value of accreditation of school board members and heads of schools who have served during an accreditation process differ significantly from those of board members and heads of schools who have not?

4. What proportion of school board members and heads of schools perceive accredited schools as able to attract more and/or better qualified students than nonaccredited schools?

5. What proportion of school board members and heads of schools perceive that attendance at accredited American sponsored overseas schools improves a student's chances of admission to universities in the United States?

6. Do the perceptions of United States board members and heads of schools differ from non-United States board members and heads of schools with respect to the overall value of accreditation?

7. Do the perceptions of the overall value of accreditation by school board members and heads of schools vary as a result of size of school and accrediting agency?

Delimitations

The study was confined to surveying only board members and heads of schools in the secondary United States Department of State Overseas sponsored schools. The boards of American sponsored overseas schools are typically

comprised of individuals from the United States, the host country, and third country nationals. They represent a cross section of the community with regard to gender, age, their occupations, etc. These boards are established to develop the policies which govern the respective schools. The final decision with respect to whether the school will seek to become accredited is made by the school boards. Obviously, the perceptions the board members have regarding accreditation is vital. However, school boards will, almost universally, expect the head of the school to provide to them a recommendation with respect to major policy decisions. It follows then, that the perceptions of the heads of schools are also vitally important.

Significance of the Study

The world is increasingly viewed as a global village. Advances in development and technology are assisting the people throughout the world to know more and better appreciate one another. And, according to Conlan (1982),

the American Sponsored Overseas Schools (ASOS) play a crucial role in the value of education. In a sense, these ASOS capture the essence of education by simply existing. The presence within their communities and throughout the world tie education with that global community to which we all belong. To validate the contributions of the ASOS may be a frivolous attempt. Certainly, the value of ASOS in impacting awareness seems obvious. (p. 9)

American television and movies reach millions of people in all parts of the world today. Dress and styles, regardless of the geographical area, are becoming more alike,

and for better or worse, more American. Communication through television, telephone, and facsimile machines is setting the stage for the exchange of goods, politics, and international communication unimaginable in the past.

The United States has been the economic leader in the world for years. However, today America is forced to compete more vigorously with Japan, the European economic community, and the developing Asian countries for its normal share of the world market. It is common knowledge that world economic parameters are changing rapidly. The U.S. is losing traditional markets, but these markets will probably be replaced by information age industry. Many of these industries will be outgrowths of current combined ventures, but applying new technologies such as communications, robotics, and computer technology. As a result, more well-educated and well-informed overseas personnel will be required. Thus, U.S. corporations operating outside the U.S. will require competent personnel to manage, direct, and operate these concerns.

American foreign diplomatic missions have also increased in numbers since WW II. The U.S. presence abroad has political and economic advantages. The more the U.S. operates outside its boundaries the better chance Americans will have to understand the complexities of foreign cultures and to learn the appropriate ground rules to compete economically, while enhancing its own economy.

Baker, cited in Orr (1981b), concluded that the cost of relocating the family of an American businessman abroad was between \$25,000 and \$50,000; certainly, the cost is much higher presently. This statistic acquires additional meaning because, as Labovitz, cited in Orr (1981b) concluded, "the success of an individual on the job is directly related to the successful maintenance of the basic family structure of which he is a part" (p. 5). A study by Orr and White (1981) revealed that, "adequate schooling for dependents is an important factor in the recruitment and retention of U.S. employees abroad and the single most important factor in family adjustment overseas" (p. 6). Furthermore, corporate executives may be under great pressure to accept overseas assignments. For example,

the magnitude of distress is further amplified by data which show over 57 percent of the polled executives recognized that an overseas assignment, despite the availability or adequacy of schooling for dependents, is an important factor within their company's system of advancement and recognition. (Orr & White, 1981, p. 7)

In order to entice Americans abroad, especially with families, adequate schooling must be available.

More than 92 percent of the polled executives regarded the availability of adequate schooling to be important to the recruitment of overseas personnel. Of equal consequence is the retention of overseas personnel; again, more than 92 percent of the polled executives regarded the adequacy of schooling as an "important or very important" aspect in retaining U.S. personnel in overseas locations. (Orr & White, 1981, p. 7)

The ASOS has been providing education to the U.S. expatriates for over 100 years. The ASOS schools are very

diverse and vary in size, shape, and location. They are normally found in the cities in other nations which house embassies and/or consulates and are responsible for educating the families of U.S. business personnel and diplomats. They provide an opportunity for our U.S. presence abroad to become a reality. Most of the clientele of these school communities are the children of well-educated professionals who generally have high expectations for their children and expect schooling similar to that which one would receive in the U.S. The schools are also responsible for the children of professionals from other countries.

The ASOS are often the focal point for the international community and display and promote an American approach to education. They are the flagships of our American philosophy and educational system. And, according to Orr (1981b), if the schools are not of high quality "the international image and respect for U.S. education as the mainstay of a democratic society is damaged" (p. 14).

Researchers report that 70% to 90% of graduates of the ASOS schools attend U.S. universities. The income to the U.S. derived from these students is substantial. The number of students who graduate from these schools and attend universities is extremely high--80% to 95% is common. U.S. students make up an average of approximately 30% of the overseas school enrollments. Therefore, the majority of graduates, approximately 70%, from these schools who choose U.S. universities are host country and third country

nationals. The financial impact for the U.S. is great and provides an excellent basis for recognizing the importance of the overseas schools.

Several areas of the world have made excellent strides recently. However, the Asian countries have developed significantly during the last decade and the U.S. presence increased dramatically during the same period. A trend observed in the ASOS schools is that their size increases or decreases depending on the changing nature of the U.S. policies and the growth of business interests. For example, in 1981-82 the ASOS student enrollment in East Asia was forecast at 8,603. The 1991 U.S. Department of State Fact sheet indicates that the number has actually increased to 16,782 (Department of State Overseas Schools Advisory Council, 1990/91). This double-the-prediction-increase is due to favorable economic development and diplomatic advances in East Asia. Of particular interest, is that ASOS now supports three rapidly growing schools in China. Six years ago the enrollment in the Singapore American School was approximately 1,580; today, enrollment is over 2,000 and the school has closed admissions. The school superintendent reported a waiting list of 300 students of which 75 were U.S. children (D. Bergman, personal communication, 1991). The dilemma this has presented to American businessmen is enormous. The Jakarta International School in Jakarta, Indonesia (with an enrollment of over 2,500 pupils), has experienced a 150% growth during the last ten years. The

headmaster of this school reported that the parents of each new student must pay \$25,000 to cover the capital costs per child to reserve a seat (N. Nelson, personal communication, 1991).

To conclude that the ASOS schools operating around the world are important to America is an understatement of considerable magnitude. They are vital to the interests of the U.S. government, the educational system, and business community.

The primary reason, then, for conducting this study was to acquire and analyze information regarding accreditation of overseas schools which would prove beneficial to overseas school officials who are considering accreditation as a process for improvement. (Accreditation can be used to document quality and provide assurance of that quality to school patrons.) Also, this study will make a significant contribution to the body of literature on accreditation and overseas schools, specifically, those assisted by the United States Department of State, Office of Overseas Schools.

Definition of Terms

1. Accreditation is a formal process offered by an officially recognized agency for the recognition of a school meeting established criteria intended to assure a minimum level of quality for that institution.

2. United States Department of State, Office of Overseas Schools (A/OS) is charged with the responsibility to administer funding to overseas assisted schools from three

agencies. These agencies are the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), United States Information Service (USIS), and the U.S. Department of State.

3. American Sponsored Overseas Schools (ASOS) are recognized and supported, in part, by the United States Department of State, Office of Overseas Schools.

4. The Department of State Overseas Schools Advisory Council (OSAC) is a group composed of the representatives of major corporations in the United States which have substantial international interests.

5. The Council of Regional School Accrediting Commissions (CORSAC) is made up of the six regional accrediting associations. The members are:

Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA);
New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC);
North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA);
Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges (NASC);
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS);
Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

A regional accrediting agency is an agency for the accreditation of elementary schools, secondary schools, and colleges and universities recognized by COPA.

6. The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) is the umbrella for accrediting agencies in the United States. That is, accrediting agencies are recognized and accredited by COPA.

7. Chief School Officer (CSO) is the head of the school who reports directly to the board of directors.

8. A host country national is a citizen of the country in which the school is located.

9. A third country national is a citizen of a country which is not the United States and not the host country.

10. A United States national is a citizen of the United States.

Procedures

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceived importance of accreditation in school improvement and assurance of quality in American Sponsored Overseas Schools. Outlined in the following sections of this chapter are the descriptions of the participant schools and respondents, the survey instruments, data collection, and analysis.

Participant Schools

The participants in this study were all the current secondary level CSOs and school board members in the world whose schools are sponsored by the United States Department of State, Office of Overseas Schools. The number of such schools, world-wide, is 105.

The schools appropriate to this study were identified by a review of the Fact Sheets of all of the schools formally associated with the United States Department of State, Office of Overseas Schools. A Likert scale survey instrument, developed by the investigator and validated by educational

personnel with expertise concerning overseas schools, was used to determine the perceptions of school board members and heads of schools with respect to issues associated with the purposes of this study.

Data Collection

The survey instrument was distributed to the entire population of schools described above. It is noteworthy that the Director of the United States Department of State, Office of Overseas Schools, formally encouraged American overseas schools to participate in this investigation.

Data Analysis

The statistical procedures used to analyze the data were frequency counts, independent t-tests, and a hierarchical ANOVA. The variables included position of respondent (school board member or chief school officer), citizenship of respondent, whether or not the respondent had been a SBM or CSO during an accreditation, size of school, accreditation status of school, and accrediting agency, if any.

Overview of the Remainder of the Dissertation

The second chapter contains a review of literature relevant to the study. In the third chapter the researcher focuses on methodology, including descriptions of measurement instruments, research procedures, and data analyses. In the fourth chapter, results of data analyses is presented. The final chapter consists of the application of these results to the research hypotheses, a discussion of the results, limitations, implications, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter consists of a review of research and literature related to the study. In the first section, literature is presented describing the history of educational accreditation in America. This section is followed by the rationale for accreditation. Other research reviewed in this chapter covers the following areas: the development of accreditation standards, institutional self-improvement through accreditation, and components of the accreditation process, including (a) the self-study, (b) the visiting team, and (c) post accreditation responsibility. In the final portion of this chapter, the writer will review literature related to American Sponsored Overseas Schools, and finally, overseas school and accreditation.

History of Accreditation in America

The origin of accreditation dates back to 1867 to the Bureau of Education, which was responsible for educational activities for the entire country (Semrow, 1981). One of the major responsibilities of this early organization was to publish a list of available colleges in the United States.

In the New England area of the U.S., headmasters and principals of secondary schools believed that if there was an opportunity to meet with college leaders it would help them

to better understand college admission practices. Charles W. Eliot, president of Harvard University, and other college presidents agreed; thus, the New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (NEASC) was initiated for this purpose in 1885 (Young & Chambers, 1983).

After this initial beginning of an accreditation effort by New England school authorities, those in other regions in the U.S. soon followed. Their purposes were similar in that they were concerned with standards and more open and effective communication between high schools and colleges. Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges (MSA), representing 5 states, began in 1887; North Central Association of Schools and Colleges (NCA), representing 19 states, began in 1895; Southern States Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), representing 11 states, started in 1895; Northwest States Association of Schools and Colleges (NASC), representing 7 states, was first initiated in 1917; Western States Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), representing 2 states, had its beginning in 1962 (Stoughton, 1981).

The first high schools were accredited in 1905 by the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges (Young & Chambers, 1983). A refinement of standards, the quality and the improvement of education, continued at all levels which resulted in the first elementary schools being accredited in 1960 by Southern States Association of Schools and Colleges (Stoughton, 1981).

The National Association of State Universities was formed in 1906. Some of its tasks were to define exactly what a college was, the definition of a high school, and what constitutes a medical school (Young & Chambers, 1983). The Council of Regional School Accrediting Commissions (CORSAC) was founded in 1961. This council's responsibility was to coordinate and oversee the regional agencies.

As time passed and accreditation demands became greater, the agencies felt a need for further specialization. In 1975, the Council of Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) was formed. This agency has been a major factor in attempting to stem proliferation and to stop federal efforts to turn voluntary membership associations into quasi-governmental organizations with police powers (Harclerod, 1981).

The nature of these accrediting organizations has always been voluntary, and they came into being in response to emerging educational and social needs. In the WASC handbook (1988) it is clearly stated that the purposes of accreditation are:

1. Fostering excellence in elementary and secondary education.
2. Encouraging school improvement through a process of continuous self-study and evaluation.
3. Assuring a school and its public that the school has clearly-defined and appropriate educational goals and objectives, has established conditions under which their achievement can reasonably be expected, appears to be accomplishing them substantially, and can be expected to continue to do so. (p. 2)

The Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges manual (1988) stated that

its purposes are to encourage, advance, assist, and preserve the achievement of quality education in the Middle Atlantic States region, in the public interest and in cooperation with all interested federal, state, and private educational organizations, agencies, and institutions. (p. 7)

Accreditation is uniquely an American phenomenon. Other countries usually have ministries of education that regulate the schools (Young & Chambers, 1983). Millard (1981) stated, accreditation is a creation of the academic and professional communities. Accrediting agencies are voluntary associations of institutions and programs involved as a community in self-regulation for the assessments and enhancement of quality. (p. 3)

The researcher found that quality is a word that is most often associated with accreditation. And, as Sjogren (1986) wrote, "the essential purpose of the accreditation process is to provide a professional judgment as to the quality of the educational institution or program(s) offered, and to encourage continued improvement thereof" (p. 24).

Quality should be a fundamental element in eligibility for federal funds and accreditation is a means of judging that quality (Millard, 1987). The North Central Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation manual states, "protecting the public investment in quality education and insuring that support for schools is adequate has been NCA's historic mission" (Shirer, 1987, p. 399).

Rationale for Accreditation

The responsibility for education in the United States lies within the parameters set by the states as permitted by

the Constitution. Educators are thus responsible for setting standards and for evaluating their own educational organizations. In 1907, when Woodrow Wilson was President of Princeton University, he captured this feeling in a speech to the Middle States Association:

We are on the eve of a period of reconstruction. We are on the eve of a period when we are going to set up standards. We are on the eve of a period of synthesis when, tired of this dispersion and standardless analysis, we are going to put things together into something like a connected and thought-out scheme of endeavor. It is inevitable. (Young & Chambers, 1983, p. 5)

Following this, the reasons for seeking accreditation of educational institutions began to take on new meaning.

"The basic characteristics of accreditation are (1) its prevailing sense of volunteerism, (2) its strong tradition of self-regulation, (3) its reliance on evaluation techniques, and (4) its primary concern with quality" (Young & Chambers, 1983, p. 11).

It was during this time in our history that the Council on Regional School Accrediting Commissions (CORSAC) began. More and increasingly effective communication began to occur among the accrediting associations. This led to the identification of more uniform criteria under which these organizations could operate professionally and gain universal respect from their constituents, the public. According to Semrow (1981), it became prestigious for an institution to be granted accreditation. Educators today support accreditation for various reasons. Semrow also wrote,

accredited status attracts students, faculty, and financial support. Accreditation is prerequisite to membership in some educational associations. Accreditation smooths the path of students transferring to other institutions and of graduates seeking some types of positions. The endorsement of the accrediting agency facilitates the granting of funds by the federal government and frequently by private agencies as well. (p. 383)

Shirer (1987) believed that accreditation is important to school boards because it implies a willingness on their part to meet certain standards of service and/or preparation. Shirer also stated that it was important to communities because it assures them that their schools are of equal quality or better than other schools in the area and that they meet minimum standards as set by the accrediting agency.

The Development of Accreditation Standards

As part of being accredited, a school system must meet the standards as developed by its respective regional accrediting association. During the early years, memberships were constrained by the inspection nature of many of the regional organizations. After 1940, the associations shifted from an inspection to an evaluation format for member schools.

One of the selling points for the public is that a school or college that has been accredited has met some standards of excellence. If explicit standards are not established and applied uniformly to all member and applicant institutions, the accountability of the accreditation process is called into serious jeopardy (Stoughton, 1981, p. 41).

In 1909, the North Central Association (NCA) adopted the first set of standards for colleges. The standards

highlighted that which should constitute a four-year, standard American college, the minimum scholastic requirements of all instructors, what high school students need to gain admission to college, the minimum amount of semester hours necessary in order to graduate from college, the character of the curriculum, ensuring that the library and laboratory equipment are adequate for each course, the number of hours of work given by each instructor, and that the college must prepare its students for advanced degrees (Semrow, 1982).

With standards adopted by NCA the accreditation process took on a more meaningful and difficult role. Accreditation assures the public that minimum standards have been met. The standards have provided a useful and consistent benchmark for schools, communities, and colleges to indicate that the schools have what is necessary to provide a quality education to its students (Shirer, 1987). Having the standards identified helps provide a framework for schools, but these standards must be adhered to (and believed in) by the people in the organization if they are to have any meaning. Chester Finn (1984), cited by Shirer (1987), stated that, "standards cannot substitute for--nor in themselves create--the commitment, character, and shared values that must be embodied in the very ethos of the institution" (p. 400).

Institutional Self-Improvement Through Accreditation

The researcher found that a term used frequently by educational experts when describing the accreditation process

was "self-improvement." Writer after writer stated that a clear path or direction to educational improvement was one of the most important outcomes of the accreditation process. The writers of the Middle States Association Handbook (1988) stated, "the chief purpose of the whole accreditation process is the improvement of education for youth by evaluating the degree to which a school has attained worthwhile outcomes set by its own school staff and community" (p. 15).

North Central Association 1929's Revision of Standards Committee brought about a major change and shift from rigid standards to a notion of stimulating institutional improvement (Semrow, 1982). Lilla E. Engdahl (1981) reported that member institutions believe that accreditation does assist in institutional improvement. However, is there actual perceived change as a result of accreditation? When the institution completes its accreditation does it mean a change in some aspect of the organization will take place? Will there be "self-improvement?" The writers of the New England Association Handbook stated that following the rigorous analysis of present conditions, a plan for change can be carefully set in place (NEA, 1988). A Western States Association bulletin published in November, 1990, detailed a study completed with a sample of 23 California high schools which were visited for the purpose of an accreditation review. Of the 165 recommendations received by the schools in the accreditation report, 81 cited accreditation as a

major cause of change within the school or district office level (WASC, 1990).

Components of the Accreditation Process

All educational accreditation organizations have four basic elements--the requirement of a detailed self-study by the institution; a visiting team of nonpaid professionals who spend at least three days at the site to review the self-study and evaluate the program against the self-study; a written report by the visiting team containing commendations and recommendations for improvement; and postaccreditation responsibilities on the part of the institution.

This researcher found that all the educational accrediting agencies have similar criteria regarding the accreditation process. The criteria outlined by Western States Association (1988, p. 3-4), is that the school must show evidence that the following exist:

1. philosophy, goals, and objectives;
2. a clearly defined organization;
3. a plan for student support services;
4. a curricular program;
5. a co-curricular program;
6. a qualified staff;
7. a safe school plant;
8. continued financial support.

All educational accrediting agencies have prequalifying minimum conditions such as written philosophies, school charters, defined curricula, statements of purpose, a minimum

amount of time for which they have been in operation, and evidence of fiscal responsibility. To be accredited by any of the accrediting agencies, an institution must submit an application requesting to become a candidate for review. The agency then reviews the application and normally makes a preaccreditation on-site visit to the school. This may be done by a one- or two-person team. Their responsibility is to insure that the school is ready to move ahead in the actual accreditation process. If the school is judged to be not ready, the team advises the school of the required expectations.

If the institution is accepted as a candidate for an accreditation review, the administration of the school is usually responsible for choosing a steering committee assigned to take charge of the entire accreditation process. The steering committee most often divides itself into subcommittees, each of which is responsible for a certain aspect of the writing of the self-study. The steering committee also appoints faculty, staff, students, and community members to the various committees assigned to direct at least one area of the self-study.

The Self-Study

All the educational related accreditation agencies provide detailed directions and documentation including guidelines, handbooks, and procedures to be followed in the self-study. The accreditation procedure usually requires one or two years for the completion of the self-study. The self-

study is very demanding, time-consuming, expensive, and requires careful planning so that it does not greatly disturb or interrupt the schedules of students, teachers, or administrators (SACS, 1987). All aspects of the school are reviewed and detailed in the self-study. Members of the staff, board, community, and students are involved in this process. Isom (1982) reported research revealing that teachers and administrators agreed that the process brought school and community much closer together. In a study to determine intangible costs and benefits of the school's self-study, Armstrong (1982) found:

1. In the perceptions of the participants, the positive aspects (intangible benefits) appear to exceed the negative aspects (intangible costs) on the self-study and the team visit.
2. In the self-study the most strongly supported benefits are the generating of useful program suggestions and an increased knowledge of faculty regarding their own departments and other areas of the school. (p. 400)

While a school undertakes accreditation, an inservice program for the school and board may be very beneficial. Some schools have used the services of a consultant to provide preaccreditation inservice education for the district personnel. Armstrong (1981) found in his study of selected Arizona schools that, "it appears that the quality of the self-evaluation, as perceived by visiting team members, is higher for schools that received consultative assistance than for those that did not, particularly in the major areas" (p. 360).

The accrediting agencies approve various evaluative instruments for use in completing the self-study. The agencies will give the institution the option of choosing the instrument that best fits its needs. The researcher found that "Evaluative Criteria," a questionnaire-type instrument produced by the National Study of School Evaluation (6th edition), was recommended with great frequency by the agencies. These questionnaires are designed to provide current information regarding the perceptions of the students, teachers, and parents. The self-evaluation committees can then make judgments about perceived strengths of their school and that which is perceived as needing improvement.

The subcommittees then gather all information and prepare a report for presentation to the school's steering committee. The steering committee chair arranges the time for meetings to occur and establishes guidelines and formats for the written self-report. Members of the steering committee review the final reports to assure that they comply with all detailed requirements (MSA, 1988). When the steering committee members are satisfied, the members write a final report and prepare copies for the accreditation agency, visiting team members, and the school. In general, the reports are sent to the visiting team at least one month prior to the team's on-site visit. The team is expected to study the report carefully prior to their visit to campus.

The On-Site Visiting Team

This researcher found that accrediting agencies have similar guidelines in their approach to the visiting evaluation team. The team chairperson selected is an experienced educational evaluator who has served as a member of a previous team(s) and has been a successful cochairperson or chairperson, usually several times. S/he must be knowledgeable about the agency's guidelines and procedures and is an experienced educator (MSA, 1988). The chairperson and the candidate school are responsible for the organization of the visit. This includes proper arrangements for transportation, hotels, and meals, as well as setting up committees, scheduling meetings with campus people, and insuring necessary assistance for team members.

The visiting teams usually have a cochairperson who shares responsibilities of the chairperson. The cochairperson is generally considered as a trainee for future chairpersonships for visiting accrediting teams.

The chairperson (usually accompanied by the cochairperson) will make a preevaluation visit to the school approximately one month prior to the scheduled team visit. This pre-visit allows the chairperson to become familiar with the school, its location, key personnel, and to inspect the work facilities put in place to be used by the visiting team (NEA, 1988).

The additional visiting team members are experienced educators chosen from a list of names recommended by school

administrators and approved by the accrediting agencies. "Above all else it seems to be critically important that teams be composed of quality people, both in terms of interactive capabilities and of professional expertise" (Armstrong, 1983, p. 434). The teams are comprised of educators with backgrounds spanning the range of educational specialties. The teams are developed and balanced to represent all facets of education. For example, a visiting team for a K-12 accreditation visit might include administrators, specialists, and teachers from both the elementary and secondary levels. Middle States Association has also attempted to balance the team in terms of gender and race. An ideal team would include some members who have served on visiting teams previously and some who have not (MSA, 1988).

The actual on-site visit lasts three to five days depending on the size of the school and its location. All accrediting agencies provide guidelines that must be adhered to by the visiting team. The on-site visits are extremely demanding in terms of time and energy. The teams are divided into subcommittees and usually meet frequently during the visit. The team attempts to visit all teachers and classrooms and conducts a careful review of the entire facility. Team members are requested to focus on the self-study report and to evaluate the school against the written self-report. In addition, they evaluate the relationship between the report and their own observations. "As a

visiting team member you might seek to answer these questions: Are these practices part of the daily operation of this school? To what degree are the practices being implemented?" (NCA, 1988, p. 423). The guidelines of all the accrediting agencies state that team members should not make oral or written evaluative judgments about any member of the staff of the school under review.

The visiting team prepares a draft report at the site and the chairperson makes final comments to the campus individuals at a final, open meeting. Invited to this meeting are usually the teachers, staff, board members, other interested parties, and those having been given a special invitation by school authorities. The writers of the New England Association manual stated, "the press should not be present when the report is given, and no notes or recording should be made of the chairperson's comments" (NEA, 1988, p. C8). According to the accrediting agencies' guidelines, the comments at this meeting usually include mentioning general strengths and needs for improvement of the school and thanking the campus community for the hospitality shown the visitors.

The final report, written by the team chairperson, is sent to the accrediting agency's executive director, with a copy to the head of school, within one month following the visit. All the agencies appoint or elect boards or councils, comprised of volunteers from various educational disciplines who review these team reports and make accreditation

recommendations based on the visiting team's written report and recommendations by the chairperson. Then, the appropriate accrediting agency official notifies the head of the school of the accreditation decision.

Postaccreditation Responsibility

The length of time for which accreditation is granted varies among the agencies. Middle States Association (MSA) grants a ten-year accreditation period, but requires interim progress reports during the ten years. A school which has just been granted its initial accreditation must file a report at the end of three years. Report requirements for a reaccredited school vary from 2 to 4 years. This self-report is a statement of the progress made in accomplishing the goals and objectives from the self-study, the visiting team's recommendations, etc. Middle States Association requires at least two reports in the 10-year cycle. These reports provide consistency in the school's goal of improvement and evidence of what has, and has not, been accomplished (MSA, 1988) following the accreditation decision.

The New England Association (NEASC), which currently lists 1180 accredited schools, also grants a 10-year accreditation. The association requires a follow-up report two years after accreditation is granted. This report is to provide information to NEASC on what action has been taken by the district toward accomplishing the recommendations made by the accrediting association. New England Association of

Schools and Colleges also requires a similar report at the end of the fifth year (NEASC, 1988).

Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), which currently accredits 2000 schools, may grant up to 6 years of full status accreditation. The WASC requires interim progress reports at the conclusion of the first, second, and fourth year of the accreditation cycle. A midterm report is required at the end of the third year. In addition to the reports, after three years, a visiting team returns to the school and spends two days consulting with staff and students. The team writes a brief report for WASC which is shared with the institution being reviewed (WASC, 1988).

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), which currently accredits 11,000 schools, provides a 10-year accreditation period with interim evaluation reports every 2 or 3 years. A midterm evaluation is required in the fifth year. The purpose of this is to set institutional priorities for the next 5 years (SACS, 1987).

North Central Association, which today accredits 6,000 schools, grants accreditation for seven years. These schools are expected to provide NCA an annual progress report (Stoughton, 1981). Northwestern Association also grants a 10-year accreditation. An annual report must be submitted by each accredited school.

Each agency publishes a semiannual or annual booklet listing the names of schools which have been granted

accreditation and the term of its validity. All accrediting agencies require annual dues from each accredited school. The amount varies according to the region and to the size and type of the school accredited.

American Sponsored Overseas Schools

Prior to World War II there were only a few schools established overseas for the purpose of educating American children. These schools were usually in areas where large amounts of American capital was invested (Engleman, Rushton, Brody, & Brown, 1990). The majority of American schools overseas were begun after WW II. The Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DODDS), not a part of this present study, have over 100,000 students enrolled in their schools. However, as many students or more are educated in an estimated 200-300 independent American/International schools. According to the Association for the Advancement of International Education, the American/International School is one in which:

1. The basic language of instruction is English.
2. The school is accredited, or eligible for accreditation, by one of the member accrediting associations of the Council of Regional School Accrediting Commissions (CORSAC).
3. The course of study as well as marking, grading and reporting procedures, facilitates student and faculty transfer to other schools of a similar type and to others within the United States.
4. The school administration and governing body are responsive to the needs of their immediate user community, meaning students, parents and faculty.
5. The faculty, teachers and administrators, have an orientation to the United States through specific programs of pre-service and in-service training.
6. The curriculum is similar to those commonly found in the United States and generally meets the minimum

- requirements for admission to North American colleges and universities.
7. The student body is oriented toward programs commonly found in the United States, including those of an extracurricular and co-curricular nature.
 8. Programs of studies include courses dealing with the history, culture and language of the host country, in addition to those that are clearly North American.
 9. The School's governing body is not subordinated solely to a national government or a central ministry, but is a local entity responsive to the needs of the users of the school.
 10. The stated philosophy of the school indicates a flexibility and responsiveness to the wishes of its users and contains procedures for participation by those users to effect changes in the school's program. (p.103)

These schools became vitally important when U.S. tax dollars were being granted to certain schools from the 1940s through the 1960s (Engleman, Rushton, Brody, & Brown, 1990). In 1963, a grant was awarded to the National Education Association for a team of expert educators to visit schools in the Near East South Asia to provide a qualitative report on the schools in the area. One of the major recommendations of this committee was the establishment of an office in the American State Department to oversee and assist American-type schools overseas. In 1964, the Office of Overseas Schools (A/OS) was opened with Dr. Ernest Mannino as its first director. The functions of the A/OS, as presented in Foreign Affairs Manual Circular No. 237, dated September 24, 1964, and cited by McGugan (1970) were:

1. Plans and implements the overseas schools assistance activities of the Department of State (i.e., the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs and the Bureau of Administration) and the dependent education program of the Agency for International

- Development to assure coordination in school policies and programs.
2. Develops and recommends to the Overseas School Policy Committee, policies, criteria, and objectives, subject to applicable legislation and regulations, for assisting in the establishment and operation of American schools overseas.
 3. Develops annual and long-range plans for schools assistance, including the recommendations for regional and functional priorities, for presentation to the Overseas Schools Policy Committee.
 4. Prepares and annual consolidated overseas schools program, subject to the availability of funds and the approval of the Overseas Schools Policy Committee.
 5. Assures effective implementation of overseas schools assistance programs by working closely with overseas posts and schools, and professional education organizations, etc., in the United States.
 6. Plans, coordinates and conducts field surveys and studies on all aspects of the overseas school programs.
 7. Consults with and obtains the assistance of the Foreign Buildings Operations in the planning and construction of overseas schools and related structures.
 8. Prescribes and administers a system for reporting program progress to the Overseas Schools Policy Committee and interested offices and bureaus of the Department of State and AID.
 9. Consults with the Bureau of the Budget and other Federal agencies to ensure the coordination of overseas schools activities.
 10. Develops and recommends special programs of overseas schools assistance as required.
 11. Provides information to Americans assigned overseas and other interested parties concerning American-sponsored elementary and secondary school facilities abroad (Appendix).

The A/OS assists 177 schools in 109 countries, divided into five regions throughout the world: Europe, Africa, Near East/South Asia, East Asia, and several American Republics. Seventy-two schools are elementary or K-8, and 105 have full high schools. The total number of students in these schools is currently 92,752. Of these, 24,093 are U.S. citizens,

37,024 are host country students, and 31,635 are third country nationals.

According to the Department of State Overseas Schools Advisory Council Fact Sheet (1990/91), the nature of these American sponsored overseas schools varies greatly, but all share two basic purposes:

- a) to provide educational opportunities for American and other children generally comparable to those available in schools in the United States, and
- b) to demonstrate American educational philosophy and practice abroad in order to help further international understanding. (p. 1)

Overseas Schools and Accreditation

As noted previously, in 1961, the Council of Regional School Accrediting Commissions (CORSAC) was formed, "for the purpose of providing an organization through which regional associations of secondary schools could unite and communicate effectively to advance the cause of voluntary institution based evaluation and accreditation" (McGugan, 1970, p. 47). The responsibility for evaluating the schools overseas was distributed in the following manner under the original CORSAC agreements:

1. Europe, Africa and the Near East--Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges
2. East Asia and the Pacific--Western Association of Schools and Colleges
3. Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America--Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
4. Guam, Trust Territories of the Pacific, and the Far East--Western Association of Schools and Colleges (Southern States Association of Colleges and Schools, 1987, p. 6).

In 1979-80, the New England Association became interested in accrediting overseas schools. CORSAC agreed to "permit a school in any of the above areas, not currently accredited or in candidate status with any regional association, to make application to any association, subject to certain guidelines" (SACS, 1987, p. 6).

As noted, the first overseas school accredited was the American School in Mexico City in 1930, by SACS. The WASC accredited Manila in 1979/80. New England granted accreditation to the Anglo-American School in Moscow in 1980. In 1958, The American School of Paris, France, and the International School of Geneva, Switzerland, became the first schools accredited by Middle States (M. A. Basile, personal communication, 1991).

Summary

The researcher has presented a review of literature including the rationale for school accreditation, history of accreditation, the elements of accreditation, a general summary of American schools overseas, along with a brief history of the Office of Overseas Schools.

Accreditation has developed from its beginning as a voluntary means of school improvement through self-study and an evaluation by outside professional educators. The goal of the accreditation process is to assure quality, consistency, and continual improvement in American education. Since 1880, the American overseas schools have provided education to an ever-increasing population, and these schools have generally

chosen to become accredited in order to guarantee the adequacy of their programs. The U.S. Department of State, Office of Overseas Schools, founded in 1964, has been instrumental in providing direction and assistance to the current 177 American overseas schools. The importance of these schools as an integral force in the American presence abroad cannot be overemphasized.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to investigate whether accreditation improves the quality of the American Sponsored Overseas Schools as perceived by school board members and heads of schools of the secondary American Sponsored Overseas Schools. Specifically, school board members and heads of schools were surveyed and compared as to their perceptions concerning accreditation as it relates to the quality of their educational organization.

The remainder of this chapter includes the research questions, population, procedures, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

Research Questions

The research questions addressed in this study follow:

1. What proportion of school board members and heads of schools perceive accreditation as contributing to school improvement and facilitating educational and social change?
2. What proportion of school board members and heads of schools perceive the benefits of accreditation to outweigh the financial cost?
3. Do the perceptions of the overall value of accreditation of school board members and heads of schools who have served during an accreditation process differ

significantly from those of board members and heads of schools who have not?

4. What proportion of school board members and heads of schools perceive accredited schools as able to attract more and/or better qualified students than nonaccredited schools?

5. What proportion of school board members and heads of schools perceive that attendance at accredited American sponsored overseas schools improves a student's chances of admission to universities in the United States?

6. Do the perceptions of United States board members and heads of schools differ from non-United States board members and heads of schools with respect to the overall value of accreditation?

7. Do the perceptions of the overall value of accreditation by school board members and heads of schools vary as a result of size of school and accrediting agency?

Relevant Variables

The dependent variables in this study were

(a) perceptions regarding the contribution of accreditation to school improvement and change, (b) perceptions of the benefits of accreditation versus the financial cost, (c) perceived ability of accredited schools versus nonaccredited schools to attract students, and (d) perceptions regarding the chances of admission to universities in the United States of students attending an accredited overseas school.

The independent variables included (a) respondents' position at the school (chief school officer or school board member), (b) service or employment during an accreditation process, (c) citizenship of the chief school officer and board member, and (d) characteristics of the sample school including size and accrediting agency.

Population

There are 177 schools in 107 countries that are sponsored by the United States Department of State, Office of Overseas Schools. Of these schools, 105 have secondary programs. The population for this study included the appropriate school authorities from all secondary schools.

Procedure

A packet which included an introductory letter from the researcher, the survey instrument with specific instructions for completion of the instrument was distributed to the chief school officer of all 105 schools. The researcher distributed to each school, survey instruments for school board members equal to the number of members on the board. Each chief school officer received an instrument, was asked to distribute and collect questionnaires from school board members, and return the completed questionnaires to the researcher. Nonrespondents were followed-up by telephone and fax inquiries until 75% of the chief school officers and 65% of the school boards had responded.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire, similar for both school board members and chief school officers, consisted of 24 items with a Likert five-part response scale: SA (strongly agree), A (agree), U (uncertain), D (disagree), and SD (strongly disagree). The demographic information requested was slightly different for the two groups.

The questionnaire was developed by the investigator and validated by a panel of experts, familiar with the accreditation process and the American overseas schools, prior to its distribution. The items on the questionnaire were designed to provide information from which data addressing the research questions could be derived.

Data Analysis

A frequency count was conducted for the response to research questions #1, #2, #3, and #5, and a statistical analysis of the percentages of the two groups to each question was done. For research questions #3 and #6, a simple t-test was conducted to compare the mean data. For research question #7 a hierarchical analysis of variance was used to determine if the perceptions of chief school officers and school board members differed significantly according to school size and accrediting agency.

CHAPTER 4 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The major purpose of this study was to examine whether accreditation improved the quality of the American Sponsored Overseas Schools (ASOS) as perceived by school board members (SBMs) and the heads of schools (Chief School Officers - CSOs) serving them. Additionally, it was the purpose of this study to determine whether a difference in perceptions concerning the effects of accreditation existed between the two groups. The research questions postulated were:

1. What proportion of ASOS school board members and heads of schools perceive accreditation as contributing to school improvement and facilitating educational and social change?

2. What proportion of ASOS school board members and heads of schools perceive the benefits of accreditation to outweigh the financial cost?

3. Do the perceptions of the overall value of accreditation of ASOS school board members and heads of schools who have served during an accreditation process differ significantly from those of board members and heads of schools who have not?

4. What proportion of ASOS school board members and heads of schools perceive accredited schools as able to

attract more and/or better qualified students than nonaccredited schools?

5. What proportion of school board members and heads of schools perceive that attendance at accredited American sponsored overseas schools improves a student's chances of admission to universities in the United States?

6. Do the perceptions of United States board members and heads of schools differ from non-United States board members and heads of schools with respect to the overall value of accreditation?

7. Do the perceptions of the overall value of accreditation by school board members and heads of schools vary as a result of size of school and accrediting agency?

The research findings of this study are presented in this chapter in the following order: (a) the demographic data related to the the chief school officers (CSOs) and the school board members (SBMs), (b) a tabulation of the responses of the CSOs and SBMs to the items contained in the survey instrument, and (c) data obtained relative to the research questions addressed in this study.

Description of the Sample

The U.S. State Department Office of Overseas Schools sponsors 177 schools throughout the world, 105 of which contain kindergarten through secondary grades. These K-12 schools' CSOs and SBMs were chosen as the participants in this study. This is due to the fact that ASOS secondary schools are accredited by the various United States regional

accrediting agencies. Each of these 105 K-12 schools has a Chief School Officer (CSO) and a school board which together are responsible for the governance, administration, and management of the school. As noted above, members of these two groups were identified as the target population requested to participate in this study. Survey instruments for each group were designed, developed, and distributed to the CSOs of each of the 105 K-12 schools. Each CSO was requested to distribute the survey instruments to each board member of his/her respective school. Completed surveys were received from 413 members representing 72 school boards, amounting to 69 percent of the sample population. Of these 413 surveys, 411 were usable for the statistical analysis employed in this study.

A portion of the survey instrument related to specific demographic information regarding the CSO and SBM respondent and his/her respective school. The demographic summary of SBM responses by category follows.

(a) Size of school. For the purpose of this study, schools were categorized as "small" (1-149 secondary students each), "medium" (150 to 399 secondary students each), or "large" (400 secondary students or more). Of the 413 SBMs who responded, 110 were board members of "small" schools, 176 were board members representing "medium" schools, and 127 were board members of "large" schools.

(b) Geographical areas represented. Of the SBM respondents, 110 served on school boards in South America, 38

in Mexico/Caribbean/Central America, 83 in Europe, 16 in Africa, 81 in Near East/South Asia, and 85 in East Asia.

(c) Accrediting agency. Four of the six United States regional accrediting agencies are responsible for the accreditation of ASOS. Of the SBM respondents in this study, 127 served in schools accredited by the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges, 40 in schools accredited by the New England Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges, 148 in schools accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 80 in schools accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, and 18 in nonaccredited schools.

(d) Number of years at present school. Of the 400 SBMs who responded to the question regarding years of experience, 306 had served on the board of their schools for 3 years or less and 94 for more than 3 years.

(e) Total years of experience as SBM. Of the SBMs who responded to this question, 269 had 3 years of experience or less as a school board member and 131 had 4 years or more.

(f) Experience at other schools. Of the SBM respondents, 322 indicated that they had not served on another school board previously and 91 did have previous experience.

(g) Citizenship. Of the SBM respondents, 244 were of U.S. citizenship, 69 held host country citizenship, and 92 held third country citizenship. Eight SBMs did not respond to this question.

Completed surveys were received from 85 of the 105 CSOs, representing an 81 percent return rate. The demographic summary of CSO responses by category follows.

(a) Size of school. For the purpose of this study, schools were categorized as "small" (1-149 secondary students each), "medium" (150 to 399 secondary students each), or "large" (400 secondary students or more). Of the 85 CSOs who responded, 29 were chief school officers of "small" schools, 38 were chief school officers of "medium" schools, and 18 were chief school officers of "large" schools.

(b) Geographical areas represented. Of the CSO respondents, 22 served in schools in South America, 11 in Mexico/Caribbean/Central America, 18 in Europe, 6 in Africa, 15 in Near East/South Asia, and 13 in East Asia.

(c) Accrediting agency. Four of the six United States regional accrediting agencies are responsible for the accreditation of ASOS. Of the CSO respondents for this study, 28 served in schools accredited by the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges, 10 in schools accredited by the New England Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges, 33 in schools accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 11 in schools accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, and 3 in nonaccredited schools.

(d) Number of years at present school. Of the 85 CSO respondents, 53 had served in their schools for 3 years or less and 32 for more than 3 years.

(e) Total years of experience as CSO. Of the CSO respondents, 53 had 3 years of experience or less as a chief school officer, 19 had 4 years to 9 years, 12 had 10 to 19 years, and 1 had 20 years or more.

(f) Experience at other schools. Of the respondents, 51 indicated that they had not served as chief school officer of another school board previously and 34 did have previous CSO experience.

(g) Citizenship. Of the respondents, 74 were of U.S. citizenship, 2 held host country citizenship, and 9 held third country citizenship.

Tabulations of Survey Responses

The survey instrument administered to both SBMs and CSOs consisted of 24 items (see Appendix B) regarding their perceptions concerning the effects of accreditation. Likert scale categories were used. Participant response choices to each item were: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Uncertain (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD). The percentages of the SBMs responding to the 24 survey items by Likert scale categories are presented in Table 1. The percentages of the CSO participant responses to each of the 24 survey items by Likert category are given in Table 2.

After the percentages of responses to each item on the survey were determined for both groups, a statistical comparison was made by conducting a t-test with the alpha level set at .05 for each item, so as to determine if a significant difference existed in the overall perceptions of

Table 1
Items and Percentage of Responses of SBMs to the Survey
Instrument by Likert Category

Item	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. The accreditation process contributes significantly to the overall improvement of a school.	46.5	41.7	10.6	1.2	0.0
2. Accreditation contributes to the establishment of a better partnership among teachers, administrators, board, and community.	25.4	44.6	24.7	4.8	0.5
3. Accreditation helps a school attract better qualified teachers.	27.9	47.9	21.6	2.6	0.0
4. The diplomatic and business community are more likely to enroll their children in an accredited school.	54.4	35.1	8.5	1.5	0.5
5. Accreditation enables a school to attract more students.	30.3	44.8	21.6	3.1	0.2
6. Accreditation improves the overall quality of a school.	36.1	45.8	17.7	0.2	0.2
7. Accredited schools maintain higher standards than unaccredited schools.	25.9	40.7	27.9	5.3	0.2
8. The accreditation process contributes significantly to improvement of school curriculum.	26.9	48.4	22.3	2.2	0.2
9. Accreditation facilitates the entry of students into universities in the United States.	42.6	37.5	17.7	1.7	0.5
10. Accreditation helps a school receive grants from the Office of Overseas Schools.	17.9	32.5	46.2	2.7	0.7
11. Accreditation enables a school to be more competitive among international schools for students.	23.7	50.8	20.8	4.4	0.3
12. Schools which are accredited are justified in raising their tuition costs to meet and maintain accreditation standards.	17.0	40.4	28.6	12.6	1.4

Table 1 - cont'

Item	SA	A	U	D	SD
13. Accreditation helps a school attract a higher number of candidates for teaching positions.	10.9	50.4	34.6	4.1	0.0
14. Positive changes would occur in a school regardless of the accreditation process.	5.1	40.9	38.0	14.5	1.5
15. The accreditation process results in significant changes in the administrative practices in a school.	8.7	29.8	51.6	9.4	0.5
16. Accreditation increases the prestige of a school.	35.1	56.9	7.7	0.3	0.0
17. Accredited schools are inherently more expensive to operate than unaccredited schools.	7.5	21.3	47.0	22.5	1.7
18. Accreditation facilitates the entry of students into non-U.S. universities.	5.6	22.0	55.7	14.8	1.9
19. Accreditation benefits outweigh the financial costs.	12.6	46.0	35.1	6.3	0.0
20. The accreditation process contributes significantly to improvement of the student activity program.	7.5	29.3	50.6	12.6	0.0
21. Accreditation facilitates the transfer of students' academic credit when they move to another school.	27.4	50.6	19.6	2.2	0.2
22. Accreditation encourages teacher-initiated improvements in the school.	9.7	41.9	40.9	6.8	0.7
23. The accreditation process contributes significantly to improvement of school facilities.	9.9	41.4	36.8	11.4	0.5
24. Accreditation enables a school to attract better students.	14.0	45.5	31.0	9.0	0.5

Table 2
Items and Percentage of Responses of CSOs to the Survey
Instrument by Likert Category

Item	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. The accreditation process contributes significantly to the overall improvement of a school.	54.1	40.0	4.7	1.2	0.0
2. Accreditation contributes to the establishment of a better partnership among teachers, administrators, board, and community.	29.4	53.0	14.1	3.5	0.0
3. Accreditation helps a school attract better qualified teachers.	14.1	40.0	37.7	8.2	0.0
4. The diplomatic and business community are more likely to enroll their children in an accredited school.	44.7	50.6	3.5	1.2	0.0
5. Accreditation enables a school to attract more students.	14.1	60.0	20.0	5.9	0.0
6. Accreditation improves the overall quality of a school.	40.0	50.6	7.0	2.4	0.0
7. Accredited schools maintain higher standards than unaccredited schools.	25.9	34.1	31.8	8.2	0.0
8. The accreditation process contributes significantly to improvement of school curriculum.	29.4	57.6	9.4	2.4	1.2
9. Accreditation facilitates the entry of students into universities in the United States.	38.8	36.5	21.2	3.5	0.0
10. Accreditation helps a school receive grants from the Office of Overseas Schools.	22.4	40.0	32.9	3.5	1.2
11. Accreditation enables a school to be more competitive among international schools for students.	28.2	47.1	17.6	7.1	0.0
12. Schools which are accredited are justified in raising their tuition costs to meet and maintain accreditation standards.	17.6	55.3	17.6	9.5	0.0

Table 2 - cont'

Item	SA	A	U	D	SD
13. Accreditation helps a school attract a higher number of candidates for teaching positions.	9.4	36.5	37.6	16.5	0.0
14. Positive changes would occur in a school regardless of the accreditation process.	7.1	48.2	28.2	14.1	2.4
15. The accreditation process results in significant changes in the administrative practices in a school.	10.6	30.6	42.3	15.3	1.2
16. Accreditation increases the prestige of a school.	32.9	61.2	4.7	1.2	0.0
17. Accredited schools are inherently more expensive to operate than unaccredited schools.	11.8	24.7	38.8	23.5	1.2
18. Accreditation facilitates the entry of students into non-U.S. universities.	9.4	21.2	43.5	24.7	1.2
19. Accreditation benefits outweigh the financial costs.	35.3	55.3	9.4	0.0	0.0
20. The accreditation process contributes significantly to improvement of the student activity program.	9.4	36.5	34.1	20.0	0.0
21. Accreditation facilitates the transfer of students' academic credit when they move to another school.	20.0	55.3	15.3	9.4	0.0
22. Accreditation encourages teacher-initiated improvements in the school.	16.5	50.6	25.9	7.0	0.0
23. The accreditation process contributes significantly to improvement of school facilities.	22.4	43.5	29.4	4.7	0.0
24. Accreditation enables a school to attract better students.	5.9	52.9	31.8	9.4	0.0

the SBMs and those of the CSOs for all 24 survey items. For the purpose of statistical analysis, responses were given the following values: Strongly Agree = 1, Agree = 2, Uncertain = 3, Disagree = 4, Strongly Disagree = 5. The comparison between SBMs and CSOs is presented in Table 3. No significant difference existed between the response mean scores of the SBMs and CSOs with regard to all 24 survey items.

Table 3
The Perceptions of SBMs as Compared to CSOs Concerning the Overall Value of Accreditation

Category	Mean	Standard Deviation
SBM (411)	2.23063666	0.39253406
CSO (85)	2.20147059	0.39485819

.Results Relative to Research Questions

The seven research questions and the results of testing follow below:

Research Question Number 1

What proportion of school board members and heads of schools perceive accreditation as contributing to school improvement and facilitating educational and social change?

Survey item numbers 1, 2, 8, 14, 20, 22, and 23 were combined to contribute to an answer for Question 1.

Responses were given the following value points: Strongly

Agree = 1, Agree = 2, Uncertain = 3, Disagree = 4, Strongly Disagree = 5. The sum of the SBM responses to these eight items are presented in Column 1 of Table 4. For example, if a respondent had strongly agreed to all eight items related to Question 1, his/her raw response score would be eight. Column 2 of Table 4 reveals the number of respondents and their corresponding raw score, while the percentage of respondents with each specific raw score is given in Column 3. For the purposes of this study, it was determined that a raw score of 12 or less indicated a "Strongly Agree," 13 to 20 implied "Agree," 21 to 28 "Uncertain," 29 to 36 "Disagree," and 37 or more indicated "Strongly Disagree."

The results of data analyses revealed that 5.8% of the SBMs strongly agreed and 61.8% agreed that accreditation contributes to school improvement and the facilitation of educational and social change, while 31.9% were uncertain and 0.5% disagreed.

The same frequency count statistical procedure was applied as described above to analyze the CSO perceptions for the eight items related to school improvement and facilitating educational and social change. Table 5 presents the data for the CSOs. The sum of the CSO responses to these eight items are presented in Column 1 of Table 5. Column 2 reveals the number of respondents and their corresponding raw score, while the percentage of respondents with each raw score is given in Column 3. For the purposes of this study it was determined that a raw score of 12 or less indicated a

Table 4
SBM Perceptions Regarding Accreditation and its Relationship
to School Improvement

Raw Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
9	2	0.5	2	0.5
10	4	1.0	6	1.5
11	5	1.2	11	2.7
12	13	3.2	24	5.8
13	10	2.4	34	8.3
14	25	6.1	59	14.4
15	27	6.6	86	20.9
16	19	4.6	105	25.5
17	44	10.7	149	36.3
18	52	12.7	201	48.9
19	37	9.0	238	57.9
20	40	9.7	278	67.6
21	34	8.3	312	75.9
22	33	8.0	345	83.9
23	25	6.1	370	90.0
24	20	4.9	390	94.9
25	6	1.5	396	96.4
26	8	1.9	404	98.3
27	3	0.7	407	99.0
28	2	0.5	409	99.5
29	2	0.5	411	100.0

Table 5
CSO Perceptions Regarding Accreditation and its Relationship
to School Improvement

Raw Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
9	2	2.4	2	2.4
10	1	1.2	3	3.5
11	2	2.4	5	5.9
12	3	3.5	8	9.4
13	3	3.5	11	12.9
14	5	5.9	16	18.8
15	7	8.2	23	27.1
16	9	10.6	32	37.6
17	11	12.9	43	50.6
18	8	9.4	51	60.0
19	12	14.1	63	74.1
20	4	4.7	67	78.8
21	4	4.7	71	83.5
22	4	4.7	75	88.2
23	4	4.7	79	92.9
24	3	3.5	82	96.5
25	1	1.2	83	97.6
26	2	2.4	85	100.0

"Strongly Agree," 13 to 20 implied "Agree," 21 to 28

"Uncertain," 29 to 36 "Disagree," and 37 or more indicated

"Strongly Disagree."

It was found that 9.4% of the CSOs strongly agreed and 69.4% agreed that accreditation contributes to school improvement and facilitating educational and social change while 21.2% were uncertain. An overall comparison of SBMs and CSOs regarding Question 1 can be made by examining Tables 4 and 5. It is obvious that a high percentage of both SBMs (67.6%) and CSOs (78.8%) strongly agreed or agreed with the eight specific items, although the CSOs appeared to agree more strongly with the statements. Fewer CSOs were uncertain than were SBMs concerning the content addressed in the questions.

Research Question Number 2

What proportion of school board members and heads of schools perceive the benefits of accreditation to outweigh the financial cost?

To address Question 2, the SBM responses and the CSO responses to four survey items were analyzed. These item numbers were 10, 12, 17, and 19. As before, these response categories were given the following values: Strongly Agree = 1, Agree = 2, Uncertain = 3, Disagree = 4, Strongly Disagree = 5. The sum of the SBM responses to these four items are presented in Column 1 of Table 6. Column 2 indicates the number of respondents with each raw score. The percentage of respondents with each raw score is given in Column 3. For the purposes of this study, it was determined that a raw score of 6 or less indicated a "Strongly Agree," 7 to 10 was

Table 6
SBM Perceptions of the Benefits of Accreditation Versus the Financial Costs Involved

Raw Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
5	5	1.2	5	1.2
6	17	4.1	22	5.4
7	33	8.0	55	13.4
8	71	17.3	126	30.7
9	81	19.7	207	50.4
10	93	22.6	300	73.0
11	60	14.6	360	87.6
12	37	9.0	397	96.6
13	7	1.7	404	98.3
14	5	1.2	409	99.5
15	2	0.5	411	100.0

interpreted to mean "Agree," 11 to 14 "Uncertain," and 15 or more "Disagree."

The results of data analyses show that 5.4% of SBMs strongly agreed and 67.6% agreed that the benefits of accreditation outweighed the financial cost, while 26.5% were uncertain and 0.5% disagreed. No SBMs strongly disagreed with the four survey items related to this question.

The researcher applied the same statistical procedure as described for Question 1 to analyze the CSO perceptions for the four items related to whether the benefits of

accreditation were perceived to outweigh the financial cost. The data derived from the CSOs regarding Question 2 are given in Table 7.

The researcher found that 7.1% of the CSOs strongly agreed and 83.5% agreed that the benefits of accreditation outweighed the financial cost while 9.4% were uncertain. No CSOs disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 7
CSO Perceptions of the Benefits of Accreditation Versus the Financial Costs Involved

Raw Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
6	6	7.1	6	7.1
7	12	14.1	18	21.2
8	15	17.6	33	38.8
9	26	30.6	59	69.4
10	18	21.2	77	90.6
11	5	5.9	82	96.5
12	3	3.5	85	100.0

Research Question Number 3

Do the overall perceptions of school board members and heads of schools who have served on the board during an accreditation process differ significantly from those of board members and heads of schools who have not?

The data regarding Question 3 were statistically analyzed by using an independent t-test statistic. The means of the SBMs serving and those not serving at the school during an accreditation process is found in Table 8. Also, in Table 8, the means of CSOs employed at the school during an accreditation process and those CSOs not employed during the process at their particular school are presented.

Results of the analysis indicated no significant difference between SBMs who had served during an accreditation when compared to those who had not. In addition, no significant difference was found when comparing CSOs who were employed at a particular school during the accreditation process with those who were not. The alpha level was set at .05.

Table 8
SBMs and CSOs Having Served During an Accreditation Process
Versus Those Not Having Served During the Process

Category	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
CSOs serving during the accreditation process	34	2.25980380	0.37587410
SBMs serving during the accreditation process	150	2.18972222	0.41763134
CSOs not serving during the accreditation process	51	2.16258170	0.40605272
SBMs not serving during the accreditation process	258	2.25113049	0.37600573

Research Question Number 4

What proportion of school board members and heads of schools perceive accredited schools as able to attract more and/or better qualified students than nonaccredited schools?

Survey item numbers 4, 5, 11, 21, and 24 were designed to contribute to the answer of Question 4. Participant responses were given the following values: Strongly Agree = 1, Agree = 2, Uncertain = 3, Disagree = 4, Strongly Disagree = 5. The sum of the SBM responses to these five items are presented in Column 1 of Table 9. Column 2 reveals the number of respondents with each specific raw score, and shown in Column 3 is the percentage of respondents with each raw score. For the purposes of Question 4, it was determined that a raw score of 7 or less indicated a "Strongly Agree," 8 to 12 was interpreted to mean "Agree," 13 to 17 "Uncertain," 18 to 22 "Disagree," and 23 or more was "Strongly Disagree."

The researcher found that 22.4% of the SBMs strongly agreed and 58.6% agreed that accredited schools are able to attract better and more qualified students than are nonaccredited schools while 17.8% were uncertain and 1% disagreed. One respondent (0.2%) strongly disagreed.

The researcher applied the same statistical procedure as described above to analyze the CSOs' responses to the content of the five items related to perceptions on whether accredited schools attract better and more qualified

Table 9
SBM Perceptions on Accredited Schools Attracting More and Better Qualified Students

Raw Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
5	21	5.1	21	5.1
6	25	6.1	46	11.2
7	46	11.2	92	22.4
8	47	11.4	139	33.8
9	48	11.7	187	45.5
10	65	15.8	252	61.3
11	50	12.2	302	73.5
12	31	7.5	333	81.0
13	28	6.8	361	87.8
14	14	3.4	375	91.2
15	24	5.8	399	97.1
16	6	1.5	405	98.5
17	1	0.2	406	98.8
18	2	0.5	408	99.3
20	1	0.2	409	99.5
21	1	0.2	410	99.8
25	1	0.2	411	100.0

students. The data concerning the CSOs for these five items are presented in Table 10.

The researcher found that 12.9% of the CSOs strongly agreed and 69.5% agreed that accredited schools attract more

Table 10
CSO Perceptions on Accredited Schools Attracting More and Better Qualified Students

Raw Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
5	2	2.4	2	2.4
6	5	5.9	7	8.2
7	4	4.7	11	12.9
8	8	9.4	19	22.4
9	13	15.3	32	37.6
10	16	18.8	48	56.5
11	9	10.6	57	67.1
12	13	15.3	70	82.4
13	4	4.7	74	87.1
14	3	3.5	77	90.6
15	3	3.5	80	94.1
16	3	3.5	83	97.6
17	2	2.4	85	100.0

and/or better qualified students than do nonaccredited schools while 17.6% were uncertain and none disagreed. The results of conducting a t-test to determine the difference between the two groups revealed no significant difference. The alpha level was set at .05.

Research Question Number 5

What proportion of school board members and heads of schools perceive that attendance at accredited American sponsored

overseas schools improves a student's chances of admission to universities in the United States?

Survey items 7, 9, and 18 were designed to address Question 5. Responses were given the following values: Strongly Agree = 1, Agree = 2, Uncertain = 3, Disagree = 4, Strongly Disagree = 5. The sum of the SBM responses to these three items are presented in Column 1 of Table 11. Column 2 reveals the number of respondents with each specific raw score and presented in Column 3 is the percentage of respondents with each raw score. For this study, it was determined that a raw score of 4 or less indicated a "strongly agree," 5 to 7 meant "agree," 8 to 10 "Uncertain," 11 to 13 "disagree," and 14 or more was "strongly disagree."

The researcher found that 6.8% of the SBMs strongly agreed and 60.1% agreed that attendance at an accredited American Sponsored Overseas School improves a student's chances of admission to universities in the U.S. Of the SBMs, 30.4% were uncertain and 2.7% disagreed with the items.

The same statistical procedure as used for the above questions was conducted to analyze the CSO perceptions on the three items related to whether attendance at accredited schools improves a student's chances of admission to universities in the U.S. The data for CSOs concerning these three items are presented in Table 12.

The researcher found that 10.6% of CSOs strongly agreed and 54.1% agreed that attendance at an accredited American Sponsored Overseas School improved a student's chances of

Table 11
SBM Perceptions Concerning Whether Attendance at Accredited
 American Sponsored Overseas Schools Improves a Student's
 Chances of Admission to Universities in the U.S.

Raw Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
3	6	1.5	6	1.5
4	22	5.4	28	6.8
5	64	15.6	92	22.4
6	105	25.5	197	47.9
7	78	19.0	275	66.9
8	71	17.3	346	84.2
9	49	11.9	395	96.1
10	5	1.2	400	97.3
11	8	1.9	408	99.3
12	1	0.2	409	99.5
13	2	0.5	411	100.0

admission to universities in the U.S. Of the CSOs, 32.9% were uncertain and 2.4% disagreed with these items. A t-test determined, with the alpha level set at .05, that no significant difference existed between school board members and chief school officers on their perceptions related to these three survey items.

Table 12

CSO Perceptions Concerning Whether Attendance at Accredited American Sponsored Overseas Schools Improves a Student's Chances of Admission to Universities in the U.S.

Raw Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
3	3	3.5	3	3.5
4	6	7.1	9	10.6
5	4	4.7	13	15.3
6	22	25.9	35	41.2
7	20	23.5	55	64.7
8	12	14.1	67	78.8
9	11	12.9	78	91.8
10	5	5.9	83	97.6
11	1	1.2	84	98.8
13	1	1.2	85	100.0

Research Question Number 6

Do the perceptions of United States board members and heads of schools differ from non-United States board members and heads of schools with respect to the overall value of accreditation?

To address Question 6, the researcher first calculated the means and standard deviations of the SBMs and the CSOs for the 24 survey items according to the respondents' citizenship. Next, an ANOVA was conducted on the data for both SBMs and CSOs to determine if the perceptions of SBMs

and CSOs with U.S. citizenship differed significantly from SBMs and CSOs with non-U.S. citizenship. Additionally, because of the results of the ANOVA for the SBMs, a follow-up planned comparison was conducted for this group. The means and standard deviations for school board members according to citizenship are presented in Table 13. The means and standard deviations for the chief school officers according to citizenship are presented in Table 14.

Table 13
Citizenship of SBMs and the Relationship to Perceptions of the Overall Value of Accreditation

Category	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
No citizenship reported	12	2.02777778	0.28445263
U.S. citizenship	242	2.21315427	0.38489482
Host country citizenship	68	2.14644608	0.42090461
Third country citizenship	89	2.36985019	0.36830194

Table 14
Citizenship of CSOs and the Relationship to Perceptions of the Overall Value of Accreditation

Category	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
U.S. citizenship	74	2.20720721	0.41033853
Host country citizenship	2	1.75000000	0.29462783
Third country citizenship	9	2.25462963	0.18801370

To continue the analysis regarding Question 6, the researcher conducted an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to statistically analyze the responses according to the respondents' citizenship. The results for SBMs are presented in Table 15.

Table 15
Citizenship of SBMs as It Relates to Perceptions of the Overall Value of Accreditation (ANOVA Table)

Source of Variance	DF	Mean Squares	F Value	PR>F
Citizenship	2	1.13	7.54	.0006
Residual	396	0.15		

The F value of 7.54 indicated that a significant difference existed when contrasting the school board members' responses according to citizenship. To determine exactly where the significance lay, a follow-up planned comparison was conducted. The procedure was a t-test conducted to compare the means of each group with the means of every other group. The critical value determined using Dunn's procedure for multiple comparisons was $t_{.05,396} = 2.40$. In Column 1 of Table 16, the three possible contrasts are listed. The t-value is reported in Column 2.

The researcher found that when contrasting United States SBMs to host country national SBMs, no significant difference

Table 16
Comparison of Mean Scores by Citizenship of Perceptions of
Overall Value of Accreditation by SBMs

Contrast	t
U.S. Vs. Host Country National	1.18
U.S. vs. Third Country National	-3.39
Host Country National vs. Third Country National	-3.48

existed between the two groups. When contrasting United States SBMs to third country national SBMs, the t-value of -3.39 indicated a significant difference. The Dunn's procedure critical value was ± 2.40 at $\alpha = .05$. This implied that United States SBMs perceived accreditation significantly more positively than did the third country nationals participating in this study.

When contrasting host country national SBMs with third country national SBMs, a t-value of -3.48 resulted. Using the critical value of ± 2.40 , this indicated a significant difference between the two groups. That is, host country nationals perceived accreditation significantly more positively than did the third country nationals participating in this study.

To continue the analysis for Question 6, the researcher conducted an analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the CSOs' data to statistically analyze the responses according to the

respondents' citizenship. The results are presented in Table 17. The F value of 1.41 indicated that no significant difference existed when comparing U.S. national, host country nationals, and third country national CSOs.

Table 17
Citizenship of CSOs as It Relates to Perceptions of the
Overall Value of Accreditation (ANOVA Table)

Source of Variance	DF	Mean Squares	F Value	PR>F
Citizenship	2	0.21775979	1.41	0.2499
Residual	82	0.15440453		

Research Question Number 7

Do the perceptions of school board members and heads of schools vary as a result of size of school and accrediting agency?

To address Question 7 the researcher used a hierarchical design to analyze whether a significant difference existed regarding the perceptions of school board members and chief school officers when compared by school size and accrediting agency. As noted, for the purpose of this study, secondary schools with an enrollment of 149 students or less were defined as "small," schools with an enrollment of 150 to 399 were defined as "medium," and secondary schools with an enrollment of 400 or more were defined as "large."

Also, for the purpose of this study, schools were grouped in one of five categories: (a) nonaccredited, (b) accredited by the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges (SACS), (c) accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), (d) accredited by the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges (MSA), and (e) Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The number of respondents in each category, the means of their responses to all 24 items on the survey instrument, and the standard deviation for SBMs are given in Table 18.

Table 18
Overall Perceptions of SBMs Related to Size of School and Accrediting Agency

Category	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Small, nonaccredited	7	2.63095238	0.30940932
Small, SACS	31	2.17607527	0.39530737
Small, MSA	41	2.26727642	0.43160469
Small, NEASC	15	2.22500000	0.36657196
Small, WASC	10	2.15000000	0.35420751
Medium, nonaccredited	3	2.51388889	0.35437086
Medium, SACS	89	2.05102996	0.38197185
Medium, MSA	50	2.37750000	0.32866739
Medium, NEASC	17	2.27696078	0.36619915
Large, SACS	23	2.09782609	0.33252950
Large, MSA	26	2.29487179	0.44141865
Large, NEASC	8	2.34895833	0.18357330
Large, WASC	70	2.27738095	0.39438527

No significant difference was found when contrasting SBM perceptions as a result of size of school. The critical value was $F_{.05, 369} = 2.74$. However, when contrasting the perceptions of SBMs according to accrediting agency (with a critical value of $F_{.05, 469} = 2.51$) the F value of 3.56 indicated a significant difference. The researcher then performed a follow-up comparison to analyze the means of each of the groups. The procedure used was a Dunn's t-test to compare the means of each group with the means of every other group. The critical value varied according to comparison. The results are presented in Table 19. In Column 1 the three possible comparisons are listed. In Column 2 the t-value is reported.

The follow-up procedure revealed that each of the comparisons to the Southern States Association of Schools and Colleges were significant. No other comparisons were significant. The number of respondents in each category, the means of their responses to all 24 items on the survey instrument, and the standard deviation for CSOs are presented in Table 20.

When contrasting perceptions of CSOs according to school size (with a critical value of 1.39) no significant difference was found. Furthermore, when contrasting CSOs' perceptions according to agencies (with a critical value of 1.04), no significant difference was found.

Table 19
Comparison of Mean Scores by Accrediting Agency of
Perceptions of Overall Value of Accreditation by SBMs

Comparison	t
Non-accredited vs. SACS	4.38*
No-accredited vs. MSA	1.26
Non-accredited vs. NEASC	1.72
Non-accredited vs. WASC	2.00
SACS vs. MSA	-7.25*
SACS vs. NEASC	-3.74*
SACS vs. WASC	-4.50*
MSA vs. NEASC	1.18
MSA vs. WASC	1.78
NEASC vs. WASC	0.21

Table 20
Overall Perceptions of CSOs Related to Size of School and Accrediting Agency

Category	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Small, non-accredited	1	3.00000000	
Small, SACS	9	2.32870370	0.42920937
Small, MSA	11	2.37878788	0.34833660
Small, NEASC	4	2.30208333	0.21883266
Small, WASC	3	1.84722222	0.55486068
Medium, non-accredited	1	2.79166667	
Medium, SACS	19	2.10087719	0.33716427
Medium, MSA	12	2.21180556	0.47456065
Medium, NEASC	5	2.14166667	0.35551215
Large, SACS	5	2.16666667	0.52291252
Large, MSA	4	2.13541667	0.31250000
Large, NEASC	1	2.12500000	
Large, WASC	8	2.10937500	0.28429241

CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND DISCUSSION

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine whether accreditation improved the quality of the American Sponsored Overseas Schools as perceived by the school board members and heads of schools serving them. Further, it was the purpose of this study to determine whether a difference in perceptions concerning the effects of accreditation existed between the two groups. Specifically, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What proportion of school board members and heads of schools perceive accreditation as contributing to school improvement and facilitating educational and social change?
2. What proportion of school board members and heads of schools perceive the benefits of accreditation to outweigh the financial cost?
3. Do the perceptions of the overall value of accreditation of school board members and heads of schools who have served during an accreditation process differ significantly from those of board members and heads of schools who have not?

4. What proportion of school board members and heads of schools perceive accredited schools as able to attract more and/or better qualified students than nonaccredited schools?

5. What proportion of school board members and heads of schools perceive that attendance at accredited American sponsored overseas schools improves a student's chances of admission to universities in the United States?

6. Do the perceptions of United States board members and heads of schools differ from non-United States board members and heads of schools with respect to the overall value of accreditation?

7. Do the perceptions of the overall value of accreditation by school board members and heads of schools vary as a result of size of school and accrediting agency?

The study was confined to the chief school officers (CSOs) and school board members (SBMs) representing the 105 K-12 schools sponsored by the U.S. Department of State Office of Overseas Schools. The survey instrument included a request for demographic information such as size of school, area of the world in which the school was located, accreditation status, accrediting agency (if any), length of service of CSO and SBM, and whether they were employed as a CSO or serving as an SBM during the most recent accreditation. The survey instrument consisted of 24 items designed to measure the CSOs' and SBMs' perceptions of the value of accreditation. Participants responded to each item

on a Likert scale. Questionnaires were returned by 85 CSOs and 413 SBMs, a return rate of 81% and 69%, respectively.

To answer the research questions, specific contributing items were clustered and various statistical procedures applied. The analysis indicated that more than two-thirds of the school board members and more than three-fourths of the chief school officers who responded to the survey perceived accreditation as contributing to school improvement and facilitating educational and social change. It was also found that nearly three-fourths of the school board members and over nine-tenths of the heads of schools perceived that benefits of accreditation outweighed the financial cost. The findings further indicated that the perceptions of the overall value of accreditation by school board members and heads of schools who had served during an accreditation process did not differ significantly from those of board members and heads of schools who had not served during an accreditation process.

It was also found that more than four-fifths of both school board members and heads of schools perceived that accredited schools were able to attract more and/or better qualified students than nonaccredited schools. There was strong agreement between school board members and heads of schools that attendance at accredited American sponsored overseas schools improved a student's chances of admission to universities in the United States.

A significant difference was revealed when comparing the perceptions of the school board members according to their citizenship. United States board members' perceptions of the overall value of accreditation were significantly more positive than were third country national school board members. Additionally, the perceptions of host country national school board members were significantly more positive than were third country national school board members. No significant difference was found among the chief school officers when their citizenship was used as a variable.

The research further revealed that no significant difference existed in the perceptions of the overall value of accreditation according to the size of school. This was true for both school board members and chief school officers. When the accrediting agency was used as the variable, there was no significant difference among the chief school officers; however, a significant difference was found among the school board members. The overall value of accreditation was perceived more positively by school board members serving schools which are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, which accredits schools in Mexico, Central America, and South America.

Limitations

The limitations of this study are primarily in regard to the generalizability of the results to school board members and chief school officers from schools other than those which

were the sample population for this study. This study was limited to K-12 American Sponsored Overseas Schools; the findings cannot be applied to other public or private schools in the U.S., U.S. Department of Defense Dependent Schools, or to other American and/or international schools abroad. Additionally, the results of this study reflect the perceptions ASOS school board members and chief school officers at the present time. If this study were replicated in the future, the results might vary.

Discussion of the Results and Implications

The positive perceptions of the overall value of the accreditation process suggests that it is imperative that American Sponsored Overseas Schools continue to support and encourage accreditation of their schools. Additionally, the results of this study appear to justify the current strong support of accreditation given by the U.S. Department of State Office of Overseas Schools.

It is interesting that no significant difference in perceptions were found when comparing SBMs with CSOs concerning the overall value of accreditation. The researcher's original premise was that CSOs would perceive the process more positively than would SBMs due to their familiarity with the process. This may imply that excellent, open communication regarding the importance of accreditation exists between board members and chief school officers in overseas schools. This may occur during new board member orientation, and/or at times when the the topic of

accreditation may appear on agendas of standing board committees. However, this is problematic and cannot be verified without additional research.

It is noteworthy that a large proportion of both school board members and chief school officers perceived the accreditation process to contribute to the establishment of a better partnership among teachers, administrators, board, and community. Sharing this perception with those involved at the beginning of the accreditation process may help to insure that all parties feel a sense of unity and a common goal. This would in turn, improve school morale and contribute to a better overall climate for student learning to occur.

The accreditation process was supported by the finding that an overwhelming majority of both school board members and chief school officers for the schools in this study perceived that the diplomatic and business community would be more likely to enroll their children in accredited schools than nonaccredited schools. Since many of the school board members responding to this survey were also members of the respective business and diplomatic community, these perceptions are positive indicators of the importance of accreditation for American Sponsored Overseas Schools.

The positive responses to several specific items on the survey may be of interest to the accrediting agencies themselves. Specifically, the perception by over 90% of the respondents that accreditation increased the prestige of a school may provide additional credibility to the agencies'

philosophy and concepts. Another perception, which may be deemed important to the accrediting agencies, was that accreditation was perceived as improving the overall quality of a school. Additionally, a large majority of respondents in this study perceived that accredited schools did not cost more to operate than did nonaccredited schools. This seems to be an important finding in support of the accrediting agencies.

There appeared then, to be extremely strong support for accreditation by both school board members and chief school officers managing and administering ASOS. It is interesting, however, that the majority of the respondents did not perceive that accreditation results in significant changes in the administrative practices in the schools. This may imply that they did not perceive that the accreditation affects the role of administrators to the extent it affects the curriculum and teaching staff.

The difference in perceptions of the overall value of accreditation by third country national school board members was noteworthy. There may be several reasons for this difference. American school board members are familiar with the accreditation process because it is customary in the United States. Host country nationals whose children attend the American Sponsored Overseas Schools choose this educational process as an alternative to their own national educational system, and they may have aspirations for their children to continue their education in the United States.

They may have evaluated the results of an American education and its ability to allow their children to attend U.S. universities and therefore have become familiar with the philosophy and goals of accreditation. Host country nationals, on the other hand, may have no other alternative but the ASOS for their children when they are relocated in a foreign country. They may be unfamiliar with the accreditation process because in their home countries, the government is responsible for setting standards, practices, and curriculum for schools. This may suggest that more information and inservice orientation be made available to third country national school board members.

Even though there was no significant difference in the perceptions of chief school officers when accrediting agency was the variable, the significantly more positive perceptions by school board members in schools accredited by SACS deserves comment. This may imply that school boards in this region perceive accreditation as a stronger factor in maintaining the American philosophy and standards of education more than do schools in other regions of the world. There may be many other variables, not examined by this study, which contribute to this difference.

The high return rate of surveys in itself is noteworthy and encouraging. School board members from 72 schools responded, representing 69% of the K-12 American Sponsored Overseas Schools. The chief school officers of 85 schools responded, representing an excellent return rate of 81% of

those CSOs receiving the questionnaire. Seemingly, because of this high return rate, these perceptions can be generalized to the American Sponsored Overseas Schools as a whole, since the sample was the entire school population representing 60 countries. Beyond that, it may suggest that accreditation and its perceived value is an important subject.

Considering the mobility of expatriates, it appears noteworthy that 91 of the 413 SBMs had served previously on another school board. This may imply a continued interest in schools on the part of ASOS school board members. The fact that over three-fourths of the SBMs had not served previously may suggest the importance of CSOs' conducting thorough board member orientations on a regular basis, but especially for new board members.

Recommendations for Further Research

Because the accreditation process in any school involves more than just the school board members and the chief school officers, further investigation of teacher, student, and other school administrator perceptions could be undertaken. This would enhance and provide more complete information regarding the perceived value of the accreditation process in American Sponsored Overseas Schools.

This study should be replicated in the United States and include the additional accrediting agencies not included in this investigation. A study in the U.S. could provide

valuable information for both schools and accrediting agencies.

It might also prove interesting and worthwhile to conduct similar research with the Department of Defense Dependent Schools as the sample population to determine the perceptions of their chief school officers. (DODDS operate without elected school boards on site.)

Further research should be undertaken in the geographical areas accredited by SACS to investigate other variables not included in this study which might affect perceptions of school board members regarding accreditation. These variables might include make-up of student body, citizenship of teachers, and host country government regulations.

A qualitative study of a school's accreditation process from beginning to end would provide interesting data. Observations would include the interactions of community, board, staff, and students as they work toward the common goal of accreditation.

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE CHIEF SCHOOL OFFICER

ACCREDITATION PRACTICES AND PERCEPTIONS
IN SCHOOLS SPONSORED BY
THE OFFICE OF OVERSEAS SCHOOLS
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

January 25, 1992

For The Chief School Officer

Please provide the following information about your school.

Name of the school: _____

Secondary enrollment: _____

City: _____ Country: _____

Is your school accredited? Circle - YES NO

If so, by which accrediting agency? _____

Year first accredited? _____

Year most recently accredited? _____

For how many years have you been the Chief School Officer of
your current school? _____

Were you the Chief School Officer of your current school when
it was last accredited? _____

What is your citizenship? _____

Have you been the Chief School Officer of a school accredited
by another accrediting agency? Circle - YES NO

If yes, which school(s) and which agency(ies)? _____

For how many total years have you been the Chief School
Officer of a school? _____

What is your best estimate of the actual monetary cost of your
current school's last accreditation (excluding personnel)? _____

PLEASE COMPLETE QUESTIONNAIRE ON BACK
and return to Richard T. Krajczar

Circle the most appropriate response to each question. SA means strongly agree. A means agree. U means uncertain. D means disagree. SD means strongly disagree.

- | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|----|-----|--|
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 1. | The accreditation process contributes significantly to the overall improvement of a school. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 2. | Accreditation contributes to the establishment of a better partnership among teachers, administrators, board, and community. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 3. | Accreditation helps a school attract better qualified teachers. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 4. | The diplomatic and business community are more likely to enroll their children in an accredited school. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 5. | Accreditation enables a school to attract more students. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 6. | Accreditation improves the overall quality of a school. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 7. | Accredited schools maintain higher standards than unaccredited schools. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 8. | The accreditation process contributes significantly to improvement of school curriculum. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 9. | Accreditation facilitates the entry of students into universities in the United States. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 10. | Accreditation helps a school receive grants from the Office of Overseas Schools. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 11. | Accreditation enables a school to be more competitive among international schools for students. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 12. | Schools which are accredited are justified in raising their tuition costs to meet and maintain accreditation standards. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 13. | Accreditation helps a school attract a higher number of candidates for teaching positions. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 14. | Positive changes would occur in a school regardless of the accreditation process. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 15. | The accreditation process results in significant changes in the administrative practices in a school. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 16. | Accreditation increases the prestige of a school. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 17. | Accredited schools are inherently more expensive to operate than unaccredited schools. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 18. | Accreditation facilitates the entry of students into non-U.S. universities. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 19. | Accreditation benefits outweigh the financial costs. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 20. | The accreditation process contributes significantly to improvement of the student activity program. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 21. | Accreditation facilitates the transfer of students' academic credit when they move to another school. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 22. | Accreditation encourages teacher-initiated improvements in the school. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 23. | The accreditation process contributes significantly to improvement of school facilities. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 24. | Accreditation enables a school to attract better students. |

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

ACCREDITATION PRACTICES AND PERCEPTIONS
IN SCHOOLS SPONSORED BY
THE OFFICE OF OVERSEAS SCHOOLS
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

January 25, 1992

For School Board Members

Please provide the following information about your school.

Name of the school: _____

City: _____ Country: _____

Is your school accredited? Circle - YES NO

If so, by which accrediting agency? _____

Year last accredited? _____

What is your citizenship? _____

For how many years have you been a board member at your
current school? _____

Were you a board member when your current school was last
granted accreditation? _____

Have you been a board member for another school?

Circle - , YES NO

If so, where? _____

For how many total years have you served as a school board
member? _____

*PLEASE COMPLETE QUESTIONNAIRE ON BACK
AND RETURN TO YOUR CHIEF SCHOOL OFFICER*

Thank you for your cooperation.

Richard T. Krajczar

Circle the most appropriate response to each question. SA means strongly agree. A means agree. U means uncertain. D means disagree. SD means strongly disagree.

- | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|----|-----|--|
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 1. | The accreditation process contributes significantly to the overall improvement of a school. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 2. | Accreditation contributes to the establishment of a better partnership among teachers, administrators, board, and community. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 3. | Accreditation helps a school attract better qualified teachers. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 4. | The diplomatic and business community are more likely to enroll their children in an accredited school. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 5. | Accreditation enables a school to attract more students. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 6. | Accreditation improves the overall quality of a school. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 7. | Accredited schools maintain higher standards than unaccredited schools. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 8. | The accreditation process contributes significantly to improvement of school curriculum. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 9. | Accreditation facilitates the entry of students into universities in the United States. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 10. | Accreditation helps a school receive grants from the Office of Overseas Schools. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 11. | Accreditation enables a school to be more competitive among international schools for students. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 12. | Schools which are accredited are justified in raising their tuition costs to meet and maintain accreditation standards. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 13. | Accreditation helps a school attract a higher number of candidates for teaching positions. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 14. | Positive changes would occur in a school regardless of the accreditation process. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 15. | The accreditation process results in significant changes in the administrative practices in a school. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 16. | Accreditation increases the prestige of a school. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 17. | Accredited schools are inherently more expensive to operate than unaccredited schools. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 18. | Accreditation facilitates the entry of students into non-U.S. universities. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 19. | Accreditation benefits outweigh the financial costs. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 20. | The accreditation process contributes significantly to improvement of the student activity program. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 21. | Accreditation facilitates the transfer of students' academic credit when they move to another school. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 22. | Accreditation encourages teacher-initiated improvements in the school. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 23. | The accreditation process contributes significantly to improvement of school facilities. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 24. | Accreditation enables a school to attract better students. |

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Richard T. Krajczar was born on November 23, 1943, in Freemansburg, Pennsylvania. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in education in 1969 from the University of Wyoming in Laramie, Wyoming, and a Master of Arts degree in educational administration in 1977 from the University of Wyoming in Laramie, Wyoming.

From 1970 to 1972, he was a junior high teacher in the Cheyenne, Wyoming, public schools. In 1972, Richard went to Kabul, Afghanistan, as a teacher, then became K-12 principal in 1974. Since 1977 he has been superintendent or headmaster of three overseas schools located in Damascus, Syria, Amman, Jordan, and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. From 1980 to 1989 he served as president of the Near East South Asia (NE/SA) Association of Overseas Schools and is currently serving as vice president of the East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools. Richard is a member of the Association of School Administrators, the Association for the Advancement of International Education, and Phi Delta Kappa.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education.



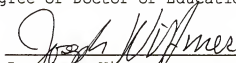
David C. Smith, Chair
Professor of Educational Leadership

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education.



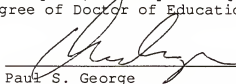
Joan L. Curcio, Cochair
Associate Professor of Educational Leadership

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education.



Joseph C. Wittmer
Distinguished Service Professor of Counselor Education

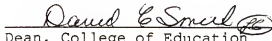
I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education.



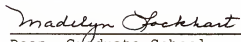
Paul S. George
Professor of Educational Leadership

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the College of Education and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

December 1992



Dean, College of Education



Dean, Graduate School